

SUPERVISOR MAPS READY FOR HEARING

Emilie Mutert, San Francisco Examiner, Tuesday, October 1, 2013, Page 9

The committee charged with choosing a redistricting map for San Mateo County narrowed the list of possible district line maps to three and recommended them to the Board of Supervisors, which will weigh them at a meeting next week.

The Supervisorial District Lines Advisory Committee, made up of nine officials from throughout the county, selected from more than 20 maps submitted by groups and individuals. The maps split the county into five districts.

The county was one of the few in the state that selected its supervisors at large, rather than on a district-by-district basis. But that all changed when voters passed a measure in November that changed the county charter so that supervisors would be elected for each of district by only the voters in each district.

A lawsuit filed in 2011 by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights demanded the county put a stop to the countywide voting, and the county at that time agreed to re-examine the existing district boundary lines to ensure they were compatible with the new election system.

The public had the opportunity to draw up their own district maps and submit them to the committee for consideration. The three that have made it to the top were submitted by the Community Unity Group, the Republican Party Central Committee of San Mateo County and former county resident James Nakamura.

District 4 Supervisor Warren Slocum, who sits on the committee, said he's been impressed by the amount of interest and engagement that's been displayed during this process.

"People are obviously interested," he said. "It's not that easy to submit these maps, but we've had a couple citizen groups that have submitted maps and revised and revised them to adjust to the comments made by our committee. They've been very dedicated."

The committee had the option to keep the district dividing lines as they were, but they've instead decided to go with adjusted versions of that map. The map that's leading the charge is the Community Unity map, though the final maps are all similar, Slocum said.

Public discussion on these maps has brought to the forefront issues that are important to county residents. For instance, Pacifica residents were concerned that their city would be split into two different districts, or that Pacifica would be split apart from the rest of the coastal community, thus diminishing coastal residents' united voice on their particular issues.

Similarly, residents in the current District 4, which includes Menlo Park and East Palo Alto and is represented by Slocum, were afraid that their region, united largely by a common Spanish language, could be split.

The committee held 10 public meetings on the topic, and it is scheduled to have its final decision ready for the Oct. 8 Board of Supervisors meeting.

"We just need to analyze the data to make sure we choose the map that makes the most sense for voters," Slocum said. <http://www.sfexaminer.com/sanfrancisco/san-mateo-county-officials-prepared-to-weigh-supervisorial-boundaries/Content?oid=2594206>